

Rightfocus



From Kuwait to County Durham: Latimer Hinks helps teaching couple buy Darlington tuition centre

Teachers Glen and Fay Blythman have returned from Kuwait to buy Darlington Learning Zone in a deal completed by leading County Durham solicitors Latimer Hinks. Glen and Fay are from Stockton and Darlington, but decided to move to the Arabian Gulf two years ago to teach at the British School of Kuwait.

They have now returned to their home in Darlington after instructing Latimer Hinks in the purchase of the tuition centre business on Darlington's Grange Road.

Latimer Hinks partner Nick Poole said: "We're delighted to have been able to help Glen and Fay to realise their dream of coming back to the North East to open their own business. They are putting their considerable teaching experience to good use, providing tuition to both children and adults."

The couple, who have been teaching for 15 years, were based in the Salwa region of Kuwait, teaching the British national curriculum to private school pupils from primary to sixth form.

Fay said: "The curriculum was the same, but you have to adapt to the different culture. You must be respectful of different traditions and beliefs. It's been fascinating for us to be able to learn from students about their culture and religion.

"But, when we saw that Darlington Learning Zone was for sale, it seemed like

perfect timing for us to come home. Now, we're trying to get used to leaving heat that could be up to 50 degrees for the vagaries of the North East weather."

Fay, who teaches maths, and English teacher Glen are gearing up for a busy summer running holiday clubs to make sure children stay on track with their learning during the long summer break.

"We know from our own experience that school holidays can be a time when children forget what they have learned. Tuition sessions can really help them to hit the ground running when they start school again in September. We also offer tuition for those making what can be the daunting jump from GCSE to A-Levels."

Darlington Learning Zone provides tuition in maths, English and science, for students aged from six upwards, although Fay and Glen have plans to offer more subjects in future.

Fay added: "We're excited about being able to work with children and their parents on what they want to specifically focus on. We can really help individuals with personalised tuition tailored to their needs every session.

"We'd like to thank Latimer Hinks for all their help in driving this deal through so we can now use all the knowledge we've gained teaching in the UK and Kuwait to take Darlington Learning Zone forward."

Welcome to Rightfocus...

In this issue we lead with the purchase of Darlington Learning Zone by local teachers that have recently returned from teaching in Kuwait.

Inside we share the news that our Private Client Department has made the shortlist for the Law Society Excellence Awards – a great achievement! We have also created a petition to end discriminatory inheritance tax rules against the childless. If you agree, please sign the petition.

Our team have been busy – we have a new appointment in the Residential Department as well as promotion for three post graduate secretaries. The team also took part in the Race for Life to money for Cancer Research UK.

On the back page Martin Williamson asks if tax increases for landlords will affect the North East property market.



Latimer Hinks shortlisted for prestigious Law Society award

Latimer Hinks Solicitors has been shortlisted for a coveted new award from The Law Society.

The firm is one of just nine legal firms across the country to have made it onto the shortlist in the Excellence in Private Client Practice category of The Law Society Excellence Awards 2015.

Latimer Hinks impressed judges including Court of Protection senior judge Denzil Lush and Julia Abrey, partner in international commercial law firm Withers Worldwide and Gill Steel, owner and director of the LawSkills consultancy.

It is the first time the firm has entered The Law Society awards, which are designed to “celebrate brilliance” in the legal profession.

Latimer Hinks CEO Anne Elliott said: “We’re excited even to make the shortlist, particularly as it’s the first time we have entered The Law Society awards.

“Our private client work is incredibly important to us here at Latimer Hinks. We help our clients with some of the most pressing and emotive issues in their lives from buying a home to

planning for retirement, drawing up a will to deciding who will take over the family business.

“Many of our clients are families which Latimer Hinks have helped for generations, so we really get to know them and build up relationships. That’s the way we have always liked to work and being shortlisted is testament to that philosophy as well as providing recognition of the strength of our team.”

The Private Client Practice category, which is new this year, was launched to celebrate excellence and outstanding achievement in private client work. Judges were looking for exceptional teams or firms who excel within the wide range of areas that make up private client practice.

Those shortlisted had to demonstrate evidence of the capacity and technical expertise needed to undertake complex and demanding private client issues as well as showing their dedication to achieving complete client satisfaction.

A Law Society spokesperson said: “We have had a great calibre of applications



this year and judging them was no mean feat. Congratulations to all our finalists.”

Winners will be announced at a black-tie awards ceremony on October 22 at London’s Hilton Park Lane Hotel

...we look forward to hearing the results!



Latimer Hinks urges Chancellor George Osborne to change ‘discriminatory’ inheritance tax rules

Lawyers at Latimer Hinks have sent an open letter to Chancellor George Osborne, demanding urgent changes to Inheritance Tax rules which they say discriminate against the childless.

Latimer Hinks CEO Anne Elliott, together with colleagues Andrew Way and Elizabeth Armstrong, has written to the Chancellor urging him to take a fresh look at Inheritance Tax allowance (IHT) legislation announced in his Summer Budget.

They have also launched a government petition in a bid to trigger a response and a parliamentary debate.

The new rules mean that from April 2017 married couples and civil partners will be able to leave homes worth up to £200,000 to their descendants without them paying Inheritance Tax.

The figure rises to £350,000 by 2020/2021. Taking the new allowance with the existing Nil Rate Band of £325,000 per person (being part of the estate taxed at 0%), married couples and civil partners will, after April 2017 have an effective exemption of £850,000 rising to £1m in 2020/2021

However, the Family Home Allowance only applies to direct descendants, meaning those who do not have children, stepchildren or grandchildren to pass their homes onto, will not be eligible.

Latimer Hinks felt compelled to act after talking to a number of clients set to lose out under the new rules.

Anne Elliott said: “We’ve had enquiries from people asking whether they can benefit from the new legislation. It’s awful to have to break the news to them that, if they are childless, these new rules don’t apply.

“It’s nothing short of discrimination to say if you are childless, you will not get the same financial advantages as those who do have children, even though you have contributed to society as a taxpayer by helping to pay for education, maternity leave and childcare costs.

“What about the sisters who have never married and wish to leave their home to each other? Or the auntie who was unable to have children of her own and loves her niece as a daughter? Or the parents who tragically lost their only child? Why shouldn’t they be able to pass their home



If you agree, please sign the petition at: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/105736>

to whomever they choose, with the same financial advantages as those who do have children?

“We are calling upon George Osborne to change the discriminatory nature of new Inheritance Tax arrangements by giving those who are childless exactly the same allowances as those with direct descendants.”



Above: The Running Team from Latimer Hinks.

£1200 Raised by Latimer Hinks Ladies for Cancer Research

Twelve members of the Latimer Hinks team have helped to raise over £1200 for Cancer Research UK by getting their running shoes on.

Latimer Hinks ladies, including solicitors and members of the administrative team, took part in the Race for Life (June 7) for Cancer Research UK, the world's leading charity dedicated to beating cancer through research.

Anne Elliott, Chief Executive at Latimer Hinks, said: "I'm delighted that so many of our Latimer Hinks ladies took part in this important challenge. It's a terrific event,

which has helped to raise a lot of money for Cancer Research UK.

"Our firm regularly takes part in, and organises, major fundraising initiatives for charity, but this year's Race for Life has proven to be one of the most popular. Most of us sadly have someone in our lives who has been affected by cancer which is why it's so important to raise money for research into the disease.

Each year, thousands of women take part in Race for Life events throughout the country to raise vital funds for a host of cancer charities and causes.



Latimer Hinks awards Training Contracts to graduates

Latimer Hinks has awarded three of its graduates trainee solicitor positions.

Abigail Noone, Toni-Ann Galvin and Nikita Noel, all graduates, started their careers as post graduate secretaries with Latimer Hinks after securing law degrees and professional qualifications at Northumbria University.

All three are now celebrating promotion to trainee solicitor roles.

Abigail said: "The legal profession is incredibly competitive so securing a position as a legal secretary is a great way to gain a future training contract. We've all made sure we've gone over and above what was expected of us as legal secretaries and Latimer Hinks has recognised that we have the necessary drive to become trainee solicitors with a view to qualifying in 2016/17."

Abigail and Toni-Ann, were in the same year at Northumbria University with Nikita graduating a year later. They will work across all departments at Latimer Hinks to gain a broad spectrum of experience.

So far, Abigail has enjoyed time in the property department, while Toni-Ann and Nikita have been busy with private client work.

Abigail said: "Buying and selling houses is an anxious time. I try to provide a calm experience for clients so their move is as stress free as possible."

Toni-Ann said: "I've been dealing with probate matters, which are often contentious, as well as court of protection work. The cases can be very complex and they require sensitivity. It's immensely satisfying when you're able to help a client through a difficult time in their life."

Latimer Hinks strengthens property team with new appointment

Jonathan Sturgeon has joined the firm as a residential and commercial property solicitor.



Jonathan helps clients with everything from business sales and purchases and commercial leases, to agricultural and residential sales. So far, he has worked on deals ranging in value from £50,000 to £900,000.

Jonathan said: "We have a lot of clients looking at investment property at the moment. There's a lot of movement in the second property market."

After graduating from Northumbria University, Jonathan, 25, trained at a mid-tier law firm in the North East before moving to Latimer Hinks.

Latimer Hinks chief executive Anne Elliott said: "We know how important property deals and purchases are to our clients, whether they are buying a new home for their family or looking for commercial premises to expand their growing business.

"Jonathan will strengthen our residential and commercial property teams to help provide our clients with the expertise, help and advice they need."

Nikita who has been working with Andrew Way, managing director at Latimer Hinks, said: "I have learnt so much working with Andrew and will continue to work with, and provide back up to, Andrew and the whole team."

The new trainee solicitors are all from the North East and were aware of Latimer Hinks' reputation as a leading law firm so jumped at the opportunity to join the company.

Latimer Hinks chief executive Anne Elliott said: "We have a strong ethos at Latimer Hinks of training and retaining good people, of rewarding hard work and talent, and promoting from within wherever possible. Abigail, Toni-Ann and Nikita have all impressed us and have proved that they have the drive, determination and work ethic to join our existing property and private client teams."

Solicitors for families,
businesses, farmers &
landowners

Contacts and services

you & your family

An understanding approach to house buying and selling, long term care and retirement, wills, trusts and probate.

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Helen Thomas, Gillian Ibbotson, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly McLoughlin, Daniel Williams, Emma Kilburn, Jennifer Quayle, Claire Conway, Julie Porter, Abigail Noone, Toni-Ann Galvin, Nikita Noel

Residential Conveyancing Team: Nicola Neilson, Martin Williamson, Jonathan Sturgeon

business & commercial

Advice on commercial property law, employment and contract law, selling a business and succession planning.

Commercial Team: Nick Poole, Anne Elliott

Commercial Property Team: Tim Haggie, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson, Adam Wood

farmers, landowners & landed estates

Knowledgeable legal expertise in land sales and purchases, land option agreements, tenancy agreements, succession planning, diversification schemes and renewable energy developments.

Agricultural Team: Tim Haggie, Anne Elliott, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Helen Thomas, Gillian Ibbotson, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly McLoughlin, Daniel Williams, Emma Kilburn, Jennifer Quayle, Claire Conway, Julie Porter, Abigail Noone, Toni-Ann Galvin, Nikita Noel

Contact details for
Latimer Hinks:

Tel: 01325 341500

lh@latimerhinks.co.uk

www.latimerhinks.co.uk



Buy-to-let: Could tax increases for landlords be bad news for the North East property market?

There were winners and losers in the Chancellor's latest budget, and landlords were firmly in the losers' camp.

A new £175,000 Family-Home Allowance is set to come into force by 2021 for property owners, on top of the current £325,000 threshold for inheritance tax (IHT). Under the proposed new rules, downsizers will keep the IHT allowance they would have been entitled to when living in their larger property even after they move.

But, the news for buy-to-let owners was not so positive. Tax relief which private landlords receive on mortgage interest payments has been slashed. Starting from 2017, mortgage interest relief on residential property will gradually be restricted, moving from 40 or 45% down to 20% by April 2020.

From April 2016, a 'wear and tear allowance', which allows landlords to reduce the tax they pay, regardless of whether they replace furnishings in their property, will also be substituted for a new system that only allows them to get tax relief when they replace furnishings.

On the face of it, the move is all about levelling the playing field in the property market for resident home owners and buy-to-let landlords.

But, analysts are warning that the new rules could bring with them an impact for the property market as a whole.



Martin Williamson,
Head of Residential Property.

The biggest problem in the property market is the lack of affordability for young people, who find themselves unable to buy because they struggle to save up a big enough deposit.

Economists at the Institute for Fiscal Studies have warned that new tax rules for landlords could end up making it even more difficult for first time buyers. Rents could be pushed up because fewer people decide to invest in buy-to-let, or because landlords want to offset extra costs. If that happens, then the amount of time it takes for would-be buyers to save that all-important deposit could increase even further.

Analysts are also suggesting there could be knock-on effects on housing supply. Newcastle-founded Barratts, for example, has revealed that 10% of the homes it built to the year-end of June were snapped up by landlords, leaving some to draw the conclusion that there could be an effect on construction rates.

Latest Council of Mortgage Lenders statistics showed mortgage lending to buy-to-let investors rose by 22% compared to the previous year. The feeling was that this pattern was set to continue, with pensioners releasing some of their pension pot to invest in property.

Buy-to-let has also been popular among landlords providing accommodation for the region's student population.

But, it may be that the housing market as a whole becomes less buoyant, with some prospective buy-to-let investors put off from starting or expanding their portfolio.

For those who have already invested, many are now taking a fresh look at their assets. One move could be to remortgage for a better deal to stop your bottom line from deteriorating.

Other options could be to assign some of the rental income to a spouse if they aren't working, or don't earn as much, allowing them to utilise their personal tax allowance, which is due to rise to £12,500 by 2020.

While the wider effect of the change remains to be seen, now could be a wise time to evaluate any property portfolio.

For further information: visit
www.latimerhinks.co.uk or call
01325 341500